UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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FEDERAL POLICY DEVELOPED TO PREVENT HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION DAMAGE TO FISH AND WILDLIFE

Secretary of Commerce Luther H. Hodges and Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall today announced a joint policy of coordinated planning designed to protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat at Federal-aid highway projects. Methods for implementing the policy have been worked out by the Bureau of Public Roads of the Commerce Department and the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Interior Department.

Secretaries Hodges and Udall said the joint policy recognizes that in order to achieve maximum effectiveness in the expenditure of public funds and at the same time protect wildlife, close coordination and cooperation are required in the planning and construction of highways which have an effect upon fish and wildlife preservation programs.

In addition to national cooperation, the success of the joint policy also will require mutual cooperation of State highway departments and State fish and wildlife agencies, the Secretaries said.

The joint policy requires that State highway departments supply to State fish and wildlife agencies advance plans for Federal-aid highway development programs. It will be the responsibility of the State fish and wildlife agencies to review these highway programs and make recommendations on ways to develop highway projects which will be compatible with fish and wildlife habitat.

The policy is implemented through a Bureau of Public Roads Regulation which requires that by January 1, 1964, each State, in requesting Department of Commerce approval for the use of Federal-aid highway funds, must certify that it has given consideration to the effects of the proposed highway project on fish and wildlife resources.

The certification from the State also will specify what actions it proposes to take in a highway construction project to protect fish and wildlife habitat. In the event a State highway department declines to accept State fish and wildlife recommendations on any projects, the recommendations—along with the reasons for declining acceptance—must be sent to the Bureau of Public Roads for consideration.

The joint policy was worked out after meetings with members of Congress who were seeking coordination of the Federal-aid highway and fish and wildlife preservation programs.

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